

THE Baptist Record

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JOURNAL OF THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION SINCE 1877

BRIEFS

LIFEWAY GARNERS WOMEN'S AWARD

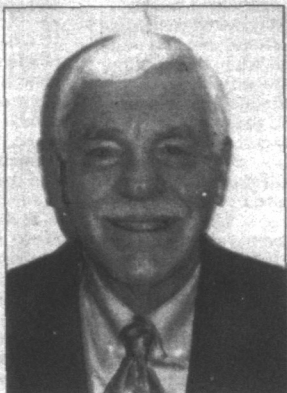
NASHVILLE (BP) — Employment honors continue to roll in for LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention in Nashville, with the entity's just-announced ranking by Forbes magazine as one of the nation's top employers for women. LifeWay landed at No. 282 on Forbes' 2018 Best Employers for Women list — the first time the business magazine has published rankings in that category. Principal Financial Group in Des Moines, Ia., was ranked first. Earlier this year Forbes also named LifeWay as one of America's Best Midsize Employers, ranking it 196th among 500 companies.

TURKEY STILL HOLDS U.S. PASTOR BRUNSON

IZMIR, Turkey (BP) — American pastor Andrew Brunson has been granted transfer from a Turkish prison to house arrest awaiting an Oct. 12 hearing, his attorneys said July 25. The move comes a week after a Turkish court denied Brunson's plea for full release after nearly two years' imprisonment on allegations of terrorism and spying, but the Presbyterian pastor has now been charged with "the crime of 'Christianization,'" said his defenders at the American Center for Law and Justice (ACLJ). Kristina Amagi, vice chair of the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom, contended house arrest is insufficient relief.

UTAH BAPTIST CHURCH APPROACHES MORMONS

ST. GEORGE, Utah (BP) — Undeterred by their location in the heart of Mormon country, Utah's Desert Ridge Church has slated training on how to evangelize members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. "We love our neighbors in Utah, and to love our neighbors it is important to understand what religious beliefs they hold," Rob Lee, executive director of the Utah-Idaho Southern Baptist Convention, told Baptist Press. The event is to be live-streamed Sept. 6-7 on the church's YouTube channel, DRBC Video.



STONE



LEE



PACE

Stone retires; Lee, Pace selected

By William H. Perkins Jr.
Editor

Major changes in one division of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB) are underway following the retirement announcement of Steve Stone, associate executive director for church growth.

With Stone's retirement taking effect after the 2018 annual meeting of the Mississippi Baptist Convention in October, the MBCB Executive Committee on July 12 tapped Michael Lee, currently the director of the Pastor-Leadership Development Department at the board, to replace Stone.

The Executive Committee also chose Lee's replacement as department director: John Pace,

longtime senior pastor of First Church, Terry.

"Without a doubt, serving Mississippi Baptists through the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board for the last 18 years has been the apex of my ministry," said Stone, age 69. "Leading the Church Growth Division has allowed me the privilege to work with some amazing and gifted servants of God.

"Serving our churches and working with our pastors, staff members, lay leaders, and associational mission directors has been a sheer delight. I am especially indebted to Dr. Futral [MBCB executive director-treasurer] for allowing me the opportunity to serve alongside him."

Stone has served at Grace Memorial Church; Gulfport;

Roseland Park Church, Pica-yune; Daniel Memorial Church, Jackson; North Fort Worth Church, Texas; Broadmoor Church, Madison; and numerous interim pastorates.

He holds doctor of ministry and master of religious education degrees from New Orleans Seminary, and a bachelor of arts degree from Mississippi College in Clinton.

Stone and his wife of 47 years, Cheryl, reside in Madison and have two adult daughters and two grandchildren.

Michael Lee, age 44, has served at First Church, Grenada; Providence Church, Hattiesburg; Macedonia Church, New Albany; New Prospect Church, Iuka; First Church, Howe, Texas; First

see STONE on p. 9

J.D. Greear to appoint sexual abuse study group

DURHAM, N.C. (BP) — Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) President J.D. Greear, senior pastor of The Summit Church in Durham, N.C., has announced he will form a Sexual Abuse



GREEAR

Presidential Study Group in partnership with the Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission (ERLC) in Nashville.

A news release from Greear's office stated, "This presidential study group will consist of outside experts and Southern Baptist leaders who will advise Greear on issues related to sexual abuse, sexual assault, domestic violence, and related subjects."

Greear's office told Baptist Press (BP) the study group's members will be announced at a later date. It will be a "working study group" with "fluid" membership, including outside experts, denominational leaders, and local church pastors, Greear's office stated.

see GREEAR on p. 9

Parallel investigations underway at IMB

RICHMOND, Va. (BP) — Two "thorough, outside, independent" investigations have been initiated by International Mission Board (IMB) President David Platt into the IMB's handling of any past sexual abuse allegations, and into its policies of zero tolerance for such abuse.

At the outset of his statement, Platt recounted that "I just returned from the last couple of weeks in sub-Saharan Africa" and had met "immediately with IMB trustee leaders."

Because there is an ongoing criminal investigation "with which IMB is committed to full cooperation," Platt said, "it is wise, for the sake of everyone involved, for me to refrain from commenting on specific details in this case."

Platt did issue a public apology to Anne Marie Miller, who has alleged sexual abuse by an individual who subsequently became an IMB missionary yet was not reported to authorities following a 2007 IMB inquiry into the matter.

Platt's actions and apology were relayed to



PLATT



MILLER



ADERHOLT

Baptist Press (BP) in a July 25 statement that is posted at the IMB's website.

Platt spoke with Miller before releasing the statement to BP, according to an IMB spokesperson. Miller subsequently sent an affirmation of Platt's actions.

"[Many] facets of this situation are extremely disturbing," Platt said of charges filed against Mark Aderholt for alleged sexual assault of a child under 17, stemming from an alleged 1996-1997 relationship when he was 25 and serving on a Texas Southern Baptist Historical Society (SBHS) board. The charges were part of a 2007 IMB investigation.

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From the editor

WILLIAM PERKINS

More gambling in Miss.

By the time most Mississippi Baptists receive the Record this week, two casinos on opposite ends of the state will be taking sports bets. More casinos are rushing to get their sports betting parlors open as soon as possible.

That's because our legislators and our Gambling Governor Phil Bryant worked very carefully to see that the wheels were greased for sports betting while critical needs like infrastructure were ignored and could require a high-expense, special session of the Legislature.

Congratulations to those politicians who have once again taken care of the gambling-political complex in our state, this time while hundreds of critical bridges over which school buses full of children must travel are literally collapsing before our eyes.

While public officials around the country are sounding alarms about sports gambling and in some cases banning the practice, Mississippi's politicians moved at breakneck speed to legalize it in this state.

Betting on actual games taking place around the country joins our Gambling Governor Phil Bryant's and the legislature's last great idea to balance the state budget: fantasy sports gambling, the practice of choosing a professional- or college-level fantasy sports team of the best players, and then betting over the Internet on their performance as part of that team.

Since sports fantasy gambling and betting on real games are so closely connected in behavioral terms, it's important to understand the danger inherent in both.

Out-of-state giants in the industry like DraftKings and FanDuel have gained billions through the betting and stand to gain billions more. Incredibly, they argue that fantasy sports betting is a game of skill, not chance.

Not so, says now-former New York state attorney general, Eric T. Schneiderman. "It is clear that DraftKings and FanDuel are the leaders of a massive, multibillion-dollar scheme intended to evade the law and fleece sports fans across the country. Today we have sent a clear message: not in New York, and not on my watch," the New York Times reported him as saying.

Schneiderman believes so strongly in the illegality of fantasy sports betting that he has accused the two

companies of "repeated and persistent fraudulent acts," and moved to have DraftKings and FanDuel repay their ill-gotten gains to victims of their schemes.

Texas attorney general Ken Paxton came to the same conclusion. "Paid daily 'fantasy sports' operators claim they can legally operate as an unregulated house, but none of their arguments square with existing Texas law. Simply put, it is prohibited gambling in Texas if you bet on the performance of a participant in a sporting event and the house takes a cut."

Nevada and Illinois have also barred sports fantasy betting, and several other states are contemplating similar action. Virtually the entire country gets it — except Mississippi.

"Giving people more ways to bet on the outcomes of sports is sure to threaten the integrity of sports and create more gambling addicts, especially among young people who are already more likely to engage in risky behaviors," opined the New York Times editorial board.

"From the moment a player signs up for an account, the experience of playing daily fantasy sports is gambling. He or she opens an online account, deposits real money, and then voluntarily places wagers on games with the aim of winning money," writes Timothy Fong, associate clinical professor of psychiatry at the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA) and co-director of the UCLA Gambling Studies Program, in U.S. News and World Report magazine.

Fong also points out that fantasy sports betting operations use language clearly tied to gambling, such as "winner take all," "high-paying contests," and "turn \$20 into \$2 million." Yet they protest that their games are not gambling.

In spite of readily observable evidence from inside this corrupt and corrupting industry, a majority of legislators and our Gambling Governor Phil Bryant appear to believe gambling is harmless enough to legalize any and all form of it.

No matter. The state will get its cut of the money and our political leaders will once again be able to dodge making difficult financial decisions.

So, what's the price of a family's soul to Mississippi's politicians? Apparently, we just found out.

Take Care

I have served in active ministry for the sake of my Lord for 40 years, and for the last decade as director of Kentucky Baptist Disaster Relief. In that time, I've learned that ministry is not for the faint of heart.

Our calling often requires us to sacrifice ourselves for the sake of Christ and others with long hours and stressful days. This can wear on us physically, emotionally and spiritually. I was reminded of this in May of last year when I began having some neck pain and numbness in my left arm. When this continued, I decided to call my cardiologist.

I was quickly scheduled for a heart catheterization, and the result was three stents placed in my coronary arteries. I am thankful for God's sufficient grace and that I could catch this health problem before it caused more serious issues like a major heart attack or stroke.

God has reminded me afresh that I cannot serve Him well if I do not take care of my own health. I would encourage you to:

■ **Develop a regular discipline of exercise.** Especially in ministry, I have found a morning 30-minute exercise regimen to be best for me since I often lose control of my afternoons and evenings as needs arise during the day. Find a type of exercise that you enjoy and can maintain. For me, it is walking or riding a stationary bike.

■ **Maintain a healthy diet.** It is easy to eat "on the go" and to make less than healthy choices. I am disciplining myself to watch my portion size, eat more vegetables and fruit, and watch my cholesterol and fats. I thank God that eating healthier has increased my energy for His sake.

■ **Get proper rest.** We all need a good night's sleep. God recharges the body when we allow it to rest and trust the events of the day to Him.

■ **Take time to get away from ministry for brief periods to allow**



Guest opinion
with Coy Webb

God to restore you. Unlike the Energizer Bunny, we will run down without some down times to relax. Ministry can be demanding and stressful, even when things are going well. Burnout and compassion fatigue are damaging to us and our families and can be deadly to ministry.

■ **Rely on the strength of God's Holy Spirit to help you begin and maintain good health practices.** If overeating is a weakness for you, then ask the Spirit to help you fight the urge when facing unhealthy food choices. If lack of exercise is your problem, then ask God to help you set your alarm and get up a few minutes earlier.

God cares about our physical, emotional, and spiritual health. He wants us to do all we can to be healthy and active for His sake for the days He has appointed us. Take care of yourself for your sake — but even deeper, for His sake.

"For you were bought at a price," Scripture tells us. "Therefore glorify God in your body" (1 Corinthians 6:20).

Webb is director of Kentucky Baptist Disaster Relief, a ministry of the Kentucky Baptist Convention. This column first appeared at the convention's news website, Kentucky Today (kentuckytoday.com), and appears here courtesy of Baptist Press. Edited for style and clarity.

Correction

On page one of the July 26 issue of The Baptist Record, Tylertown Church was incorrectly identified as First Church, Tylertown. It was a reporter's error. The Baptist Record regrets the error.

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Seminaries take lead in addressing sex issues

NASHVILLE (BP) — From Southeastern Seminary in North Carolina to Gateway Seminary in Southern California, SBC seminaries are training students and faculty to recognize and deal with abuse, reemphasizing personal sexual morality, and offering resources to those struggling with sexual sin.

Southeastern Seminary has "raised the flag and heightened the alert," Akin told Baptist Press (BP), "given the cultural trends that we're now encountering, given the technological world in which we live," where moral failings often are widely publicized.



AKIN

Southeastern Seminary requires all employees to take an online training course covering sexual misconduct and reporting abuse, Akin said. The seminary also has revised and clarified institutional policies on sexual misconduct and has begun running background checks on all incoming students.

This fall, Southeastern Seminary will implement a training program required for all incoming students "to help them understand what their responsibility is if indeed they become aware of a situation where sexual abuse may have taken place," Akin said.

The minister's personal conduct and integrity are discussed in courses on theology, pastoral ministry and spiritual formation, Akin said.

"What has happened in our culture" with the #MeToo movement "was also something of a wakeup call for the church," Akin observed. The past year's reports of sexual immorality in the SBC have been "heartbreaking at every turn," but "we can come out on the other end of our pain much better, much stronger, and far more equipped to deal with issues like this in the future."

While federal law requires that colleges and universities participating in government programs offer training in sexual abuse prevention and reporting, no such requirement governs SBC seminaries so they offer training programs voluntarily, Akin noted.

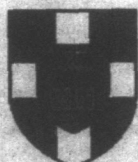
Some Baptist colleges are mandated by law to offer training, however.

Southern Seminary in Kentucky told BP it has for the past year required all students, faculty, and staff to complete an online training program that equips them for prevention of and proper response to sexual abuse in ministry settings.



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Southeastern
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"We are being more direct about teaching leaders the importance of submitting themselves to accountability systems, including how to create those systems in ministry organizations that often resist such 'corporate bureaucracy.'"



Jeff Iorg

president of Gateway Seminary

The seminary pays the fee for the training, which is obtained through the organization MinistrySafe.

Southwestern Seminary in Ft. Worth told BP it trains students to identify and prevent sexual harassment and abuse in at least eight courses in the curriculum. Faculty and staff are trained in the same areas through the employee manual and a required harassment compliance class.

Southwestern Seminary's communication vice president, Charles Patrick, wrote a July 17 post on the seminary's blog asking, "Is pornography morally acceptable at seminary?" and answering that "God's Word has... the answer for breaking the selfish and superficial shackles of pornography."

Midwestern Seminary in Missouri told BP in a statement, "Our employee policies and training procedures, student handbook, and academic catalog speak clearly" against harassment and sexual misconduct "and specifically encourage all to bring forward any concerns as to a violation of our policies and implore all employees to report immedi-

ately any awareness of alleged violations."

Jeff Iorg, president of Gateway Seminary in California, wrote in an April 16 blog post that "starting last year, we have revised our curriculum at Gateway to include much more intentional instruction about moral purity, sexual harassment, sexual abuse, and protecting people under our spiritual leadership."

"We are being more direct about teaching leaders the importance of submitting themselves to accountability systems, including how to create those systems in ministry organizations that often resist such 'corporate bureaucracy.'"

Glenn Prescott, Gateway Seminary's director of theological field education, told BP via e-mail that the seminary has overhauled approximately six courses over the past few years and added a course to the curriculum on "ministry finance and strategic planning," which includes training on prevention and handling of sexual abuse.

This fall, Gateway Seminary will begin providing "sexual abuse awareness training for

all of our students," Prescott said. That training eventually will be part of two courses taken by each student — one early in their course of study and one late.

In addition, the seminary's two-semester ministry internship program includes a two-hour session on sexual purity utilizing a video case study of a predatory pastor who pursues sexual relationships with people in the congregation.

Gateway Seminary's curriculum tweaks "did not begin as a response to the actions of the most recent (past couple of years) public #MeToo events across the country nor the proceedings at this year's SBC annual meeting," Prescott said. "We have tried to be ahead of the curve."

The SBC annual meeting in Dallas earlier this summer included adoption of a resolution, On Abuse, as well as discussion of sexual misconduct in the main meeting and at auxiliary events.

Chuck Kelley, president of New Orleans Seminary, told BP the institution he leads has adopted a two-pronged approach

to teaching ministers about sexual misconduct and abuse: "building godly men with godly character," and "teaching them how to help people who have been victimized or caught up in sexual abuse."

The foundation course at New Orleans Seminary that addresses godly character is a required spiritual formation class which includes small-group meetings with a professor. Risk management, safety

for children and adults, domestic violence and mandatory reporting laws are covered in required courses on church leadership and administration, pastoral ministry, and counseling in ministry.

"These issues are hit two or three times in the curriculum for nearly everybody, and then we have specialized training for people who are in fields like counseling and social work," Kelley said.

New Orleans Seminary was reminded of the need to emphasize personal integrity, Kelley said, by professor John Gibson's 2015 suicide amid his struggle with sexual sin, and by another professor's resignation over a moral failure.

Kelley noted that with professors and students, the seminary seeks to strike a balance between accountability and ministry. As part of that balance, the seminary has an arrangement with a local Christian counseling practice where faculty who need help with personal and moral issues can receive counseling billed to the seminary without the seminary being told their identity.

"All we get is the bill," Kelley pointed out.

Kelley said while it is possible to focus so much on preventing and responding to sexual misconduct that believers neglect the Great Commission, the moral climate of New Orleans Seminary — where "the world's values are 'just jammed in your face' — long has demanded focus on sexual abuse and misconduct.

Because of similar worldly values permeating American culture everywhere, Kelley said, "All six of our seminaries agree these are important issues."



PATRICK



PRESCOTT



KELLEY

The title is correct — The Menace, as in Dennis the Menace. Dennis has been showing up in newspapers all across America almost every day since May 12, 1951. While the world has drastically changed since he arrived, this little five-and-a-half-year-old kid has not changed a great deal. He came on the scene as a menace and he has pretty much remained that all through the years and throughout his neighborhood.

The fact is he almost always stays in trouble, but he's such a cute kid and doesn't seem to be a mean boy. He just gets into stuff he probably shouldn't and sees life in a way that a five-year-old boy does, but he is a menace. If he is living in your home, which he may be, you will know at times you don't know what to do with him.

Recently, in the daily one-frame cartoon, Dennis was talking to a neighbor and he said about his dog that was right next to him scratching, "He's not itching for a fight. He's got fleas." Though I don't read Dennis every day, I have never seen him when he didn't have some profound look at what was going on around him, or when the others around him had a profound look at him.

It got me to thinking about the menaces that we put up with. We know of people who probably are a menace, and oftentimes the people we know see us as the menace. While I don't think Dennis the Menace is a vicious or mean kid, at times he is almost innocent and at times you think he could do better than that. It's not unusual for us to see folks at work or church or leaders or followers who are not in some interesting and unique way being a menace like Dennis. Let me just address three menaces that I see at times in the church: fights, fleas, and frustrations.

The first thing is the fights. Dennis is standing by his dog scratching away and points out to the neighbor, "He's not itching for a fight." While that may be true, there are times when some folks are just itching for a fight. In fact, their day will not be complete unless they find somebody that isn't walking and talking, acting or reacting the way they think they ought and that makes it time to draw the line and get into it.

I know there are people who are just wired up that way. They live most of



The Menace

their lives with eyes squinted looking for some conspiracy, their lips poked out to let you know they are mad, and their fists balled up waiting for you to contradict them. They are itching for a fight. This scenario happens in almost every arena of life. It doesn't matter if it's sports or politics, church or the grocery store, somebody is not going to be happy about life and they are ready with their finger on a trigger.

It has always been that way. After three-and-a-half years of training, teaching, encouraging, and role modeling, Jesus heard His disciples get into an argument about who was the greatest. Can you imagine that discussion? Obviously, there was more than one candidate so there they are, almost in eyesight of the cross and getting into a fight about their supremacy.

Surely in the work of God there are times that the line ought to be drawn and we shouldn't go any further, but even then it may be that you take your stand without hitting the person in the nose before they even know what happened. Fights do come and for the people of God, we need to remember that there are some things that are not worth fighting over. I think of how many churches where people get into a tiff about the way people dress. I've talked to people who were mad because people wear flip flops to church and others who got ticked off because somebody wore a tie to church. I know there are boundaries of good, appropriate dress but I would suggest to you that if the Lord Jesus Himself showed up in His first century garb, most all of us on what-

ever side we're on would want to fuss and argue and fight.

I have spent decades in churches and loving the folks there who had different opinions about virtually everything you can think of. Still, they are the sheep of the Lord and our best days may not be when we draw swords and cut each other to bits. The Apostle Paul used a lot of ink and a good bit of parchment writing to churches that had fusses and squabbles and fights, but he didn't praise them for it. He tried to help them to overcome the type of display that is anything but honoring to God.

Beyond just fights, there are people who apparently have fleas. Fleas are not sharks nor alligators. Fleas are a little bitty speck of an animal. Don't fool yourself, though. They can bother your dog or cat and they can bother you. There are many of us who have gotten fleas. One of the interesting things about fleas is that you can tell when a dog has fleas and may never even see the flea. That's true with people, too. They may be scratching and uneasy about something that has touched their lives and you don't even know what it is, but you know something isn't right and it may be a worrisome flea.

Some of the Lord's fine sheep have fleas. You'll see them itching and scratching about the length of the sermon or the loudness of the music, the temperature being too low or too high, too much emphasis on missions or not enough emphasis on missions. It's not a deadly thing that's happening, but just a

flea and they are obviously uncomfortable about it touching their life. Bro. Dennis' dog wasn't itching for a fight; he just had fleas. It's important for us to watch and see that those kind of things can happen to us, too.

The final thought to which I want you to give some consideration is frustrations. This isn't about fighting and or fleas. It's about some folks who may be in a scratching/itching mood having to do with pure life frustrations. We rarely know what's going on in people's lives. We may think we know, and yet we know very little. They may be dealing with frustrations you and I know nothing about but if we did, we would say, "Goodness, I understand why they act that way."

It may be a frustration they are carrying even on their way into the worship center. It may be a migraine or a struggle over a missed opportunity. It may be the weather or a wayward child. Their frustration could be indebtedness or personal insecurities. It may be because of an upcoming appointment with the doctor or a meeting with the IRS. The list is endless of the things people are carrying in their hearts and with which they are frustrating their lives, and they may be sitting right there next to you down the pew. The point is that there are many frustrations all of us carry. Just as fights can be menacing and fleas can be irritating, frustrations can be overwhelming.

What do you do with all this stuff? We pray for one another, for sure. Beyond that, we can encourage one another to do what Scripture says: "Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you. (1 Peter 5:7). Cast all your care upon Him — the fights, fleas, and frustrations that may be in you and me, but also may be the uneasiness and the awkwardness, the ill feelings that we develop because somebody else has frustrations or fleas or are ready to fight. Even there, the all is all inclusive. Casting all of your care upon Him for He careth for you.

Dennis the Menace may show up and sit down on the pew just down from you this Sunday morning — or it may be you yourself in that role. Either way, be prepared.

The author can be contacted at directions@mbcb.org.

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YSQ RAOMAZPAWQ DFQ QBA YATJ

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Clue: J = M

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Luke 9:2

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HEUCKS RETREAT BAPTIST CHURCH, BROOKHAVEN, MS IS SEEKING A BI-VOCATIONAL MINISTER OF MUSIC. Persons interested may email resume to Corey Myers at cmeyers913@gmail.com or mail to Heucks Retreat Baptist Church, 2167 Heucks Retreat Rd NE, Brookhaven, MS 39601, attn.: Corey Myers. Position description available upon request. Deadline to apply is October 1, 2018.

RICHMOND BAPTIST CHURCH IN RURAL LEE COUNTY, MS, NEAR TUPELO IS SEEKING A BI-VOCATIONAL PRAISE TEAM LEADER/MUSIC MINISTER. Email resume to baptistworshipleader@gmail.com

Brandon woman starts unique ministry for women

BRANDON (BP) — Women & Work, a ministry launched this year with a panel at the Southern Baptist Convention's annual meeting, seeks to fill a void in Baptist life for women who want to contribute to the Kingdom by working in ministry, working from home, or working in the secular world.



MOORE

Courtney L. Moore, the ministry's founder, is a stay-at-home mother of three and pastor's wife in Brandon, and she explained her personal journey is part of what led her to start Women & Work.

She felt called to ministry in high school but didn't know many women in full-time minis-

try. "I didn't even know what that would look like, so my vision for what I would be as a woman in ministry was to marry some guy in ministry and serve with him. ...I felt like if you're going to be a biblical woman, what you have to do is get married, have kids, and be a stay-at-home mom."

That's what Moore ended up doing, but not before she earned a religious studies degree from the University of Mobile, and a biblical counseling degree from Southern Seminary in Louisville, Ky., and served two years with the International Mission Board.

"Even with that education, I just never saw myself working," said Moore, whose husband Brent is an adult groups pastor for Pinelake Church, Brandon.

Moore said about four years ago, she "just kind of realized

I'm made for more. As much as I loved the home and loved my children, I just knew this is not all for me."

She began looking for ways to use her skills and started writing part-time for her church.

Last year was Moore's first time to attend an SBC annual meeting, and she went to various auxiliary events for women and realized there was "a group of women that are not being addressed and that really are not given a voice."

She was inspired by Baptist21, a pastor-led network that provides a platform for younger pastors in the SBC, and she organized a panel discussion at this year's annual meeting for the group she found underrepresented — women who work.

Panelists for Women & Work: Stepping into Kingdom Produc-

tivity were Amy Whitfield of Southeastern Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C.; Kelly King and Mary Wiley of LifeWay Christian Resources in Nashville; and Lauren McAfee of Hobby Lobby Stores in Oklahoma City, Ok.

Moore estimated close to 125 women attended the Tuesday night event. "I thought it was wonderful. I was so pleased with the turnout. ...It seems like Southern Baptist, conservative, complementarian women want to know how their faith can be integrated into their work. We just want to provide resources for them and encourage them."

Moore hopes to host the panel again next year, maybe adding women from secular jobs such as executives and doctors. "I'm fascinated with how they view their work and how they integrate their faith in it, and

how they are doing good for the world through their jobs."

Another goal is to add content to the Women & Work blog explaining the theological aspect of work. She hopes to start a podcast to interview women in a variety of workplaces.

Moore underscored, though, the importance of work done in the home for the advance of the Kingdom. "Glory to God for stay-at-home moms. ...He is going to honor that, and it is going to make an eternal difference. It is work that remains. It is fruit that will not perish."

There is more than one way to be a biblical woman, Moore said, whether it's full-time work at home or full-time work outside the home. "We feel this pressure that we should be doing this or that. No matter where you come from, you feel that."

Philippines president rumbles country with controversial remarks

DAVAO CITY, Philippines (BP) — The Filipino president's offer to resign if anyone can prove the God of the Bible exists has drawn reactions from Christians across the globe. Dan Santiago, president of the Filipino Southern Baptist Fellowship of North America, said,



DUTERTE

Rodrigo Duterte lacks "solid biblical knowledge of the Judeo-Christian God."

Meanwhile, Filipino Catholic leaders who have feuded publicly with Duterte called July 9 for "God's mercy and justice" on blasphemers, according to The Wall Street Journal.

Duterte's latest remarks about God came July 6 at the opening of a science and technology event in Davao City, where he noted he does believe in a supreme being but not the biblical God.

Since taking office two years ago, Duterte has drawn criticism for his crass public comments and his war on crime, which human rights groups say has included the executions of thousands by police without due process.

"If there is any one of you... who say you'd been to heaven, talked to God, saw Him personally, and that He exists, the God [that] is yours, and if he does, it's true, I will step down [from] the presidency," Duterte said according to The Independent.

The Filipino president challenged even one witness to come forward with a selfie with the Christian God or other evidence of His existence.

"You do that today, one single witness, that there is a guy, a human being [who] was able to talk and to see God," Duterte said. "Of the so many billions, I just need one and if there is one, ladies and gentlemen, I will announce my resignation immediately."

Santiago, pastor of Covenant Christian Church in Jacksonville, Fla., told Baptist Press Duterte "obviously... does not have a solid biblical knowledge of the Judeo-Christian God" and "relies on his personal understanding of who God is."

"Largely, his comments are aimed at the Roman Catholic Church in particular due to his bad experiences with them."

Duterte has said he is Catholic and has alleged he was abused by a priest as a child. He "has frequently lambasted priests," The Wall Street Journal reported, "calling them corrupt womanizers."

In late June, Duterte called the Christian God "stupid" and described Him with an expletive for allowing Adam's sin in Genesis 3 to affect the entire created order, according to media reports.

Those remarks drew criticism from Filipino Catholics and Protestants alike, with prominent evangelical leader Eddie Villanueva saying he "felt holy anger" and believed Duterte was "violating the soul of the nation" by mocking the God acknowledged in its constitution.



AVERAGE AGES DROPPING — The latest registration report from this year's Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting in Dallas showed increases in first-time attendees and those in the 18- to 39-year-old range. (BP photo)

Younger messengers show up for SBC 2018 annual meeting

DALLAS (BP) — Nearly twice as many messengers attended the 2018 Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) annual meeting in Dallas when compared to the previous year, fueled by a strong Southern Baptist presence in Texas, the SBC Executive Committee has announced. The latest registration report also showed increases in first-time attendees and those in the 18- to 39-year-old range.

Messengers in Dallas totaled 9,632, SBC registration secretary Don Currence announced July 10. Including guests, exhibitors, credentialed press, and others, 16,032 is the official attendance count.

In 2017, SBC messengers totaled 5,015, with registered attendance numbering 9,315, according to 2017 attendance figures.

"We weren't surprised," Currence told Baptist Press. "We were expecting it to be on target for what it did for Dallas." The

2017 annual meeting site, Phoenix, drew a lower crowd because of travel expenses and a lower Southern Baptist population, Currence said.

Specifically, Texas has 2,654,439 Southern Baptists among 6,275 churches — the largest membership of any state. Arizona has 88,502 Southern Baptist members among 417 churches.

Working with Currence in compiling annual meeting statistics, Bill Townes, SBC Executive Committee vice president for convention finance, noted the high percentage of first-time attendees.

"An interesting fact is that 35% of attendees (completing the survey) reported attending their first SBC Annual Meeting," Townes, told BP. "The average percentage of first-time attendance over the last 16 years is 21%."

Dallas messengers represented 3,796 churches in 48 states,

the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. Texas led states in messenger representation with 2,055, followed by Louisiana with 737, Tennessee with 617, North Carolina with 552, and Oklahoma with 536, according to the registration report.

Similarly, Texas led in the number of churches that sent messengers, 709; followed by Tennessee, 253; Louisiana, 229; Georgia, 225; and North Carolina, 216.

Two thirds of messengers, 6,404, were men, compared to 3,228 women. Statistics tracking gender were similar in 2017, when 64% of messengers were men.

Less than 15% of 2018 messengers, 1,333, completed the SBC annual meeting survey that gathers additional demographic information, Currence reported. Of the sampling, 25.2% were between the ages of 18-39, while 26.7% were age 60 and above.

Just for the Record



CALVARY CHURCH, BOGUE CHITTO, recognized the oldest mother, the mother with the most children present, the youngest mother, and all mothers over 80 years old May 13.



CALVARY CHURCH, SUMMIT, sent 16 children and three adults to Camp Living Waters, Loranger, La., July 12 - 15. Bobbie Dunaway, GA leader; Mike Burns, pastor.



SPRING CREEK CHURCH, PHILADELPHIA, licensed Joseph Blount to the gospel ministry July 15. Pastor Josh Meadows presented Blount with his license.



SUNRISE CHURCH, LEAKE COUNTY, sent several RA's to Central Hills Baptist Retreat. Shown are Drew Kelly, Carter Pigg, John David Gill, Jaxon Permenter, Cole Ingram, Jaxon Kelly, and Peyton Thornton.



SEMINARY CHURCH, SEMINARY, licensed John Mark Humphrey to the gospel ministry July 15. Shown are pastor Tim Hubbard, Humphrey, and associate pastor Colby Lambert. Humphrey will be attending William Carey University in the fall.



Seven members of the **TISHIMINGO ASSOCIATION** went to Costa Rica July 17 - 23. Shown are AMD Robbie Crane, Donnie Cain, Austin Knapp, Brooke Hudson, Caleb Woodruff, Jack Brady, and Dwight Brady.



Leaders of the Mississippi Women Lawyers Association saluted Mississippi College Law School Dean Patricia W. Bennett with the organization's 2018 Lifetime Achievement Award. The honor in July goes annually to a Mississippi female attorney who's been a trailblazer for women in the legal profession. This summer, Bennett also became president of the Mississippi Bar Association. She began teaching at the MC Law School in 1989. The Mississippi native is a graduate of Tougaloo College and MC Law School in downtown Jackson.



CALVARY CHURCH, BOGUE CHITTO, sent nine students to Super Summer at Mississippi College. Jason and Jenny Leggett, youth leaders.

The week of July 9th, **EPHESUS CHURCH, FOREST** sent their children and youth groups to camp. Nineteen children from 1st through 6th grades attended Central Hills Children's Camp along with two chaperones. Twenty-one students from grades 7th through 12th traveled to Pensacola Christian College in Pensacola, FL, to attend Teen Extreme Summer Camp.



Staff Changes



SUNRISE CHURCH, PETAL, has called Blake McDaniel as pastor. He is shown with his wife Kayla and daughters Alyiah and Grace.



FIRST CHURCH, GAUTIER, has called James Wilson as minister of students, outreach, and missions. Shown are Wilson and his wife Melissa.



STRONG HOPE CHURCH, WESSON, has called Matt Scopel (top right) as pastor. Pictured with Scopel are front, from left, Zeke, Canaan, Issa, Elam, and Eden. Back, from left, are wife Amy with Parker, Rose, Judah, and Sam.

In other Staff Change News:

► **Raymond Road Church, Jackson**, recently welcomed Josh Horner as pastor, along with his wife Jessica and their three children.

Vacation Bible School



CONCORD CHURCH, BRUCE, recently held Vacation Bible School.



FIRST CHURCH, WINONA, held Vacation Bible School June 4 - 8 with an enrollment of 119 and a \$1200 missions offering to Baptist Children's Village. Iva Ruth Faulk, VBS director; Jay Anderson, pastor.



The RA's and GA's from **FIRST CHURCH, CHICORA**, recently visited the Baptist Children's Village, Waynesboro, to present a check for the money they took up during VBS. Nine children professed Christ during VBS. Mitchel Smith, pastor.



FARMHAVEN CHURCH, CANTON: Average attendance, 72; at least two professions of faith; missions offering, \$1083.61.

Revivals & Homecomings

► **Rock Bluff Church, Daniel Community, Puckett**: Homecoming, Aug. 5, 11 a.m.; Jim Putral, speaker; Donnie Stuart, pastor.

► **Philadelphia Church, Etta**: Revival, Aug. 5 - 8; Sun., 11 a.m., followed by meal and 6 p.m.; Mon. - Wed., 7 p.m.; P.J. Scott, speaker; Gerald Frederick, music; Bobby Irvin, pastor.

► **Sunrise Church, Petal**: Homecoming, Aug. 5; service, 11 a.m., followed by lunch; Blake McDaniel, speaker.

► **Sardis Church, Smith County**: 42nd annual homecoming, Aug. 5; service, 10:30 a.m.; cemetery fund offering; Wayne Adams, speaker; Ray "Pete" Ainsworth, music. Revival, Aug. 6 -

8, 7 p.m.; Paul Barnard, speaker; Joe Styron, music.

► **Mt. Vernon Church, Eupora**: Revival, Aug. 5 - 8; Sun., 6 p.m.; Mon. - Wed., 7 p.m.; Allen Basswell, speaker; Arey Hill, music.

► **Linn Church, Doddsville**: Homecoming, Aug. 5; service, 10:30 a.m., followed by meal; Allen Robison, speaker.

► **Society Hill Church, Oakvale**: Revival, Aug. 5 - 8; Sun., 11 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Mon. - Wed., 7 p.m.; Cedrick Lumpkin, speaker; Wesley Lee, music; Jake Staten, pastor.

► **Centerville Church, Carroll County**: Homecoming, Aug. 5; service, 10:30 a.m. followed by fellowship meal; Zane Hodge, pastor and speaker.



CENTER HILL CHURCH, MONROE ASSOCIATION, celebrated its 81st homecoming/memorial day service June 3. Tommy Doughty, guest speaker. Shown are pastor Terry Edwards and Tommy and Gretchen Doughty.



SPRING HILL CHURCH, WATERFORD: Monica Winningham, director; John Parker, pastor.

Rwanda government cracks down on houses of worship and pastors

KIGALI, Rwanda (BP and local reports) — Churches and mosques remain closed in Rwanda months after the government began shutting down Christian and Muslim houses of worship — with more purging promised by the Rwandan government using alleged building code violations and placing heavy requirements on pastors, World Watch Monitor reported July 27.

Only 13.8% of more than 8,000 houses of worship closed since March 1 have managed to meet new regulations and reopen, a government leader said on the pro-government KT Radio July 15.

In an official July 28 statement on "Regulating Faith Based-Organizations in Rwanda," the Rwanda Governance Board (RGO) said, "the closures do not infringe on freedom to worship, but rather address the alarming proliferation of places of worship in dilapidated and unhygienic conditions, as well as troubling behavior of unscrupulous individuals masquerading as religious leaders."

The government accused religious leaders of insulting women and other religions, and forcing followers to fast "to the point of death from starvation."

However, an analyst requesting anonymity told World Watch, "on checking which churches were included (in closures), all churches are suffering the same fate, and... even churches considered luxurious for local standards have had to close."

A lack of freedom of the press hampers reporting in the country rated as "not free" in the 2018 Freedom of the World report by Freedom House.

In the latest government report, the RGO said "the right to religion... guaranteed in Article 37 of the Rwandan Constitution" of 2003 and amended in 2015 has led to the founding of too many churches and the establishment of too many religious denominations.

In Kigali, where 700 churches were closed on March 1 alone, 1,176 villages were served by about 2,000 prayer houses including 1,400 churches. The typical village population includes 80 to 150 families, the RGO said.

"I don't think we have as many boreholes [deep wells]," Rwandan President Paul Kagame has said, in reference to the number of churches in Kigali. "Do we even have as many factories? This has been a mess!"

Closed churches are finding it difficult if not impossible to make changes the government



DANGEROUS ACT — Members of a Pentecostal Foursquare Gospel Church in Agatatu, Rwanda worship March 21 in what could be considered a risky activity in a nation where the government has closed 8,000 Christian and Muslim houses of worship so far this year. (BP screen capture from Foursquare Gospel Church YouTube video)

requires, World Watch said.

Regulations not originally enforced or enacted are now being imposed on churches in Rwanda, which had a 2017 Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of only \$710 per capita, based on the 2018 Freedom in the World report.

By way of comparison, the U.S. had a 2017 GDP of \$59,500 per capita, according to established statistics.

Among requirements that houses of worship must meet, toilets must be a certain distance from a church's en-

trance, church access roads and campuses must be paved, churches must have lightning conductors, and inside walls and ceilings must be plastered and painted.

Regarding religious education, schools can only teach theology if they also teach science and technology, World Watch reported, and pastors must have degrees from accredited schools.

Six pastors were arrested with the original closures, although all have since been released.

OBITUARIES

Donnie Wallis, 66, longtime Mississippi Baptist minister of music whose last post was at Oak Hill Church, Baldwin, died July 10 at his home after a long battle with cancer. He was in the music ministry for 48 years and served in several Baptist churches, including 18 years at Oak Hill Church. Survivors include his wife, Judy C. Wallis; sister, Kay Old (Harry); six children: Amy Owens, Millie Lewis, Kim Wallis Cagle (Mark), Matthew Malone (Cynthia), Suzanne Wallis Powell (Pat), and Clay Wallis (Donna); and 14 grandchildren. Funeral service was July 12 at Waters Funeral Home in Baldwin. Expressions of sympathy may be sent to the family at www.watersfuneralservice.com.

Catherine "Cathy" Louise Broadwater Jeffcoats, 65, longtime Christian educator, died July 18 at St. Dominic's Hospital in Jackson after an extended battle with cancer. She served at Woodlawn Church, Vicksburg; Parkway Baptist Church, Natchez; Pinelake Church, Brandon, and was currently serving as minister of adult education at First Church, Jackson. Some of her awards included being named a Leading Business Woman by the Mississippi Business Journal in 2001; Boy Scouts Shepherd Award in 2012; and the Baptist Association of Christian Educators Distinguished Leadership Award in 2014. She served as president of the Miss. Baptist Educators Association from 2014-2015. Other accomplishments included being featured on the Mississippi Strong segment on WLBT-TV in Jackson in 2017; and service on the board of Downtown Partners in Jackson. Jeffcoats was preceded in death by her parents, Clifton and Myrtle Broadwater; and by her brother, Cliff, Jr. She is survived by her husband, Pat Jeffcoats; daughters, Christy Smalling (Chris) and Amanda Grissom (Patrick); sister, Nedra Boggs (Vic); and six grandchildren. A Celebration of Life Service was held July 21st at First Church, Jackson. Online guestbook may be signed at www.chancellorfuneralhome.com.



JEFFCOATS

Club, and was voted Most Handsome and Mr. Pearl High School. Laird received a bachelor of science degree from Mississippi College in Clinton, and both MDiv. and DMin degrees from New Orleans Seminary. He worked for Armstrong World Industries for more than forty years, and was called to the ministry and was ordained as a Baptist minister in 1989. Laird was a charter member of McLaurin Heights Church, Pearl, where he served as deacon, RA leader, Sunday School director, and teacher. He served as the pastor of Andrew Chapel Church, Brandon, for more than twenty years. He was associate pastor at Antioch Church, Florence, at the time of his passing. Laird leaves behind his wife of 63 years, Jo Ann; two daughters, Robin Miles and Ruth Ulrich (Mark); two grandchildren; and one great-grandchild. Funeral service was held at Ott and Lee Funeral Home in Brandon on July 23, followed by interment at Antioch Church, Florence.

Mack Prentiss Jones, 89, of Purvis, Mississippi Baptist pastor and international missionary, died July 19. He was born January 2, 1929, the youngest of eight children, to Lawrence & Lula Jones, in Wayne County near Waynesboro. Jones received an associate of arts degree from Jones County Junior College in Ellisville, and a bachelor of arts degree from Mississippi College at Clinton. He also held bachelor of divinity and masters of theology (with honors) degrees, both from the New Orleans Seminary. He was ordained as a minister on August 29, 1950, at Clara Church, Clara. In 1950 he began his ministry as pastor of Liberty Church in Alabama. During his many years in the ministry he served as the pastor of churches in Mississippi, Oregon, and Alabama. In 1963, Jones and his wife Marie were appointed to the mission field by the Southern Baptist Convention's Foreign Mission Board (now known as the International Mission Board), and served in South America and Mexico until retiring in 1994. Pagosa Springs, Co., became their new home where they continued to serve in ministry until returning to their home state of Mississippi and settling in Purvis in 2014. Jones is survived by his wife of 65 years, Marie Martin Jones. He was preceded in death by his parents, Lawrence and Lula Jones; brothers, Pat Jones, Aubrey Jones, Albert Ray Jones, and Melvin Jones; and sisters, Almoa Jones, Elsie Beard, and Lois Russell. Funeral services were held July 26 at First Church, Purvis. Hulet-Winstead Funeral Home in Hattiesburg was in charge of arrangements.



JONES

J. T. Laird, 84, longtime Mississippi Baptist pastor, died July 20. A fifth generation Mississippian, Laird was born in Jackson, on April 16, 1934. Laird attended Pearl High School in Pearl, where he graduated with the school's first senior class. He lettered in football and basketball, was the president of the Beta



LAIRD

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STONE

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Church, Reform, Al.; and Calvary Church, Vernon, Al.

He was licensed and ordained by Fairview Church, Columbus.

Lee holds a bachelor of arts (psychology) degree from Mississippi State University in Starkville; master of divinity (Biblical studies) and master of theology (Old Testament/Hebrew) degrees from New Orleans Seminary; and is pursuing a doctor of ministry (strategic leadership) degree at New Orleans Seminary.

Lee and his wife of 23 years, Jennifer, reside in Brandon with their son and two daughters.

"I am both excited and humbled at the opportunity to serve in this role, and I am richly blessed to build on the work of a man of God like Steve Stone," Lee said. "Please pray for the Church Growth team as we make this transition and as we explore the next chapter that God has for our ministries."

North Carolina native John Pace, age 54, has served First Church, Terry, for 20 years. He has also served at Walnut Grove Church, Walnut Grove. Prior to his call to ministry, he worked

as a public affairs assistant, media relations assistant, and radio newscaster/sportscaster.

Pace, a pastor's son, holds bachelor of arts in speech communication and bachelor of arts in public relations degrees from North Carolina State University in Raleigh, N.C. He holds master of divinity (Biblical languages), master of theology (preaching), and doctor of philosophy (preaching) degrees from New Orleans Seminary.

Pace and his wife of 30 years, Dawn, reside in Terry and have three adult sons.

"I am truly honored and humbled for God to provide me this opportunity to serve in His Kingdom and serve Mississippi Baptists by assisting and supporting the great churches and pastors throughout our state," Pace said. "I look forward to starting this work and encourage everyone to contact me in any way I can be of assistance and help."

"While I am excited about this new opportunity, we are saddened to leave as pastor our family of faith and friends at FBC Terry, who have blessed our lives and ministry so wonderfully for 20 years. Words cannot express how much we love and appreciate you."

IMB

cont. from p. 1

Aderholt, who later served at two Arkansas churches and with the South Carolina Convention, was arrested July 3 in Fort Worth and released on bond.

Platt stated he is "commencing a thorough, outside, independent examination of IMB's handling of past actions — including this case and any other similar situations. In addition, I am commencing a thorough, outside, independent examination of IMB's present policies to ensure that our current commitment to zero tolerance for child abuse, sexual abuse, and sexual harassment is completely and consistently enforced across IMB today."

"Further, I am presently in conversations with leaders of other churches and ministries, particularly within the SBC, to establish practical ways we can and must prevent situations like this in the future. Any attempts to minimize, ignore, cover up, or overlook child abuse, sexual abuse, or sexual harassment are absolutely intolerable, and we must take

action together now to ensure safety and support for every person employed or affected by a church or ministry."

Platt, addressing Miller, stated, "I want to publicly apologize for the pain and hurt that Anne Miller has specifically suffered in this situation. I will not presume to know the variety of other emotions and challenges that she, those around her, and others who have walked through similar situations have experienced. Further, I want to apologize for various ways we in the IMB have contributed to such hurt and pain through our response to this point."

"In addition, I want to publicly thank Anne Miller for the courage she showed in approaching IMB in 2007, and the courage she is showing even now. I realize the actions I have outlined above cannot remove her hurt and pain, or the hurt and pain of others who have experienced similar situations. ...I am committed to doing all that I can so that her courage, and the courage of others like her, will prevent hurt and pain among others in the future."

Miller, in a response e-mailed to BP, said, "I am grate-

ful for David Platt's immediate and thorough response upon his return from Africa today. His apology and the action of obtaining third-party investigations into my case and all other similar cases demonstrates his commitment to not tolerating sexual abuse or misconduct in any capacity."

"Furthermore, the conversations happening in the IMB and in convention leadership encourage me that abuse survivors will finally have an ally in the Church as we pursue healing. It's my prayer that past and present survivors receive the support we need and the policies which result from these changes will prevent future victims from becoming so. I am excited and hopeful for the future of the SBC and am thankful for the many voices who are encouraging and inciting change along the way."

Platt concluded his statement asserting that "we must do better. In the IMB. In the SBC. In any church and any ministry, we must do everything we can to protect children and adults from abuse and harassment, and we must do everything we can to hold anyone who is guilty of these things fully accountable."

Submission Guidelines

The Baptist Record is pleased to publish news and photographs of special events that take place in cooperating churches of the Mississippi Baptist Convention. News items and/or photographs depicting benefits and activities for secular or outside organizations will not be published.

Preferred method: news may be submitted electronically to the e-mail address below, and must be included in the message segment of an e-mail form. Secondary method: news may be typewritten or neatly printed on 8 1/2 by 11-inch paper and mailed. All articles must be received in writing; no articles will be accepted over the telephone. Due to ever-present virus threats, no text attachments will be accepted. Photograph attachments in JPEG format are permissible.

Please make articles concise. Include the who, what, when, where details of the story, along with a contact person's address and telephone number.

Photographs must be submitted electronically via e-mail, as attachments in JPEG format. **Hard copy photographs mailed through the postal service will not be accepted.** Photographs must be clear, sharp, and well-lighted. Photographs must depict people. No landscape, building, or object-only photographs will be printed. Photographs containing inappropriate gestures and objectionable clothing will not be published. Cell phone photographs and other low resolution items that do not reproduce well on newsprint are generally not publishable.

There is no guarantee that news items and/or photographs will be published, and unsolicited material will not be acknowledged or returned. All news items are subject to editing, and all photographs are subject to cropping. News items and/or photographs can be published one time only. Deadline for submitting news is one week prior to requested publication date. Articles that are not date-sensitive will be published on a space-available basis. These guidelines are not meant to be exhaustive.

Submit news to The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. FAX: (601) 292-3330. E-mail: baptistrecord@mbcb.org.

GREEAR

cont. from p. 1

"The group's purpose," according to the release, "will be to consider how Southern Baptists at every level can take discernable action to respond swiftly and compassionately to incidents of abuse, as well as to foster safe environments within churches and institutions."

"This group will study both how Southern Baptists are currently engaging these issues and develop recommendations in consultation with relevant SBC entities on strategies and resources for ministering to victims and protecting people and

churches from predators."

Greear stressed the seriousness of the study group's mission.

"How we as a convention of churches care for abuse victims and protect against vile predators says something about what we believe about the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Our churches should be a refuge for the hurting and a safe haven for the oppressed," Greear said.

"Over the next year, I look forward to hearing from this group and partnering with our churches, state conventions, local associations, seminaries and national entities to determine what we can do to equip churches to minister effectively

and stand guard against any who would seek to prey on the vulnerable."

The study group stems from actions of messengers to the SBC 2018 annual meeting in Dallas earlier this summer, according to the release.

Messengers adopted a resolution, On Abuse, which stated they "condemn all forms of abuse;" "urge abuse victims to contact civil authorities, separate from their abusers, and seek protection;" and "encourage leaders in our churches and Southern Baptist Convention entities to be faithful examples, through their words and actions;" and "to speak against the sin of all forms of abuse."

Truth is not relative.

Find it in the One who is the way, truth, and life.

Simply share the following prayer with God in your own words:

1. Lord, I admit that I need you. (I have sinned.)
2. I want forgiveness for my sins and freedom from eternal death. (I repent.)
3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you. (I believe in Jesus.)
4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life.

From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with Him. (I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.)

"But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name." (John 1:12)

If you make a decision for Christ today, contact a local Southern Baptist church for spiritual guidance.

THE VILLAGE VIEW



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GIFTS OF HONOR AND MEMORY

A portion of The Village View is allocated each month to a list of Gifts of Honor and Memory. Many groups and individuals elect to pay tribute to others through this sensitive, meaningful, and helpful medium. This feature is hopefully designed to further honor, with taste and respect, those who are and have been special to our special friends.

JUNE

MEMORIALS

Mrs. Maggie Crenshaw
FBC Louisville
Mrs. Susan Cribbens
Dr. & Mrs. F. David Rives
Mrs. Cheryl Cummins
Mr. & Mrs. Mike Dean
Mr. Eddie Daves
Mr. & Mrs. Mike Dean
Mrs. Mariana Davis
Mr. & Mrs. Jimmy Bruton
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JULY 1-15

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JULY 1-15

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BCV EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

The BCV employs Christian, mission-minded, husband and wife teams, without dependent children or pets, to serve in the position of Houseparents. The couples must be mature Christian adults with personal integrity, character and of good reputation with standards and ethics expected of any member of The Baptist Children's Village staff.

They receive a salary with benefits and are provided a private bedroom and meals while on duty. The primary job responsibility of Houseparents is to maintain a home-like environment that models healthy, Christian family living for children and youth residents. They are the primary caregivers and help with everything from transportation and homework to laundry and meals when on duty.

Houseparent responsibilities are varied and somewhat dependent upon which campus and to which cottage the couple is assigned. However, all Houseparents need to be in good physical, mental and emotional health. They must be cooperative and comfortable working in a team environment.

To apply for the current Houseparent openings, please contact Celeste Cade at ccade@baptistchildrensvillage.com or 601-922-2242.

A complete job description and application may be downloaded at www.baptistchildrensvillage.com.

Averted • 2 Samuel 20:1-2, 14-21

The end of a civil war is often very emotional and messy. Reconstruction is very difficult to lead and very often resisted. David had been very wise to get the priest to tell Israel not to be the last to restore him to his palace. In doing this, he reminded them, "You are my brothers, my flesh and blood. So why should you be the last to restore the king?" 2 Samuel 19:12(CSB).

All seems to be going smoothly when you read, "So all the people crossed the Jordan, and then the King crossed," 2 Samuel 19:39. It still sounds like everyone is happy when you read, "All the troops of Judah and half of Israel's escorted the king," 2 Samuel 19:40. All is not pleasing to everyone because we read, "Suddenly, all of the men of Israel came to the king. They asked him, 'Why did our brothers, the men of Judah, take you away secretly and transport the king and his household across the Jordan, along with all of David's men?' 2 Samuel 19:41 (CSB). That sounds almost like one child telling the teacher 'Teacher, he is looking at me.' Or 'Mama, Donnie's half of the candy bar is bigger than mine.'"

The complaint that David crossed the Jordan in secret does not sound logical. There was no place for him to hide on the banks of the Jordan River. All of David's household (wives, concu-

bines, children, servants, advisers), all the soldiers of David's Southern Army from the tribe of Judah, and half of Israel's troops were crossing the Jordan. With the armies of Judah and Israel, there would have been thousands of armed men.

This led to an angry response from the tribe of Judah to the ten tribes of Israel: "Because the king is our relative. Why does this make you angry? Have we ever eaten anything of the king's or been honored at all?" 2 Samuel 19:42 (CSB). This argument contradicts David's emphasis in 2 Samuel 19:12, "You are my brothers, my flesh and blood."

The Devil found a trouble maker from the tribe of Benjamin named Sheba. The Bible tells us in 2 Samuel 20:1, "Now a wicked man, a Benjamite named Sheba son of Bichri, happened to be there. He blew the ram's horn and shouted: We have no portion in David, no inheritance in Jesse's son, Each man to his tent, Israel!" 2 Samuel 20:1 (CSB).



Explore the Bible

with Don Hicks

David was very concerned about Sheba. David considered this a greater threat than Absalom's rebellion. King David made Amasa General of Judah's Army. David ordered General Amasa to summon the men of Judah within three days. Amasa failed to meet this deadline. David made a very poor decision to make Amasa commander of Judah's army. Amasa had lead Absalom's rebel army against David. This would have been like President Lincoln appointing Robert E. Lee

General of the United States Army after he was defeated as Commander of the Confederate Army. Amasa had not been a good military leader for Absalom.

Since Amasa was clearly failing, David appointed another General. He appointed Joab's brother Abishai. This gave the ambitious Joab an opening to regain his power as Commander of the army. To take this power for himself, he tricked and killed Amasa just as he had murdered General Ab-

ner years before. Joab took the Army to capture Sheba. Sheba ran to Abel of Beth-maacah in the far north of Israel, as far away from King David and Jerusalem as he could get.

"Joab's troops came and besieged Sheba in Abel of Beth-maacah. They built a siege ramp against the outer wall of the city. While all the troops with Joab were battering the wall to make it collapse," 2 Samuel 20:15 (CSB). Things were looking very bad for the people of Abel of Beth-maacah. Joab only knew the wicked rebel leader Sheba was hiding in the city and he assumed that the city was hiding and protecting him. A "wise woman" acted and averted destruction of her city and averted a very bad problem for Joab and King David.

The "wise woman" called out from the city and asked to negotiate with General Joab and he listened to her offer. The people of the city under the leadership of the "wise woman" executed Sheba and threw his head over the wall. Immediately Joab ended the siege and left the city without destroying it.

Hicks is associational missions director for Jasper Association in Bay Springs.

Persist • Nehemiah 4:1-3, 6-9, 14-18

Nehemiah was made aware of the conditions of the Jews who had returned from captivity to Jerusalem (Nehemiah 1:1-3). Through prayer, Nehemiah was presented with the opportunity to act on behalf of the Jews. With the king's blessing and the needed supplies, Nehemiah travelled to Jerusalem, assessed the situation, and began to rebuild the walls. (Nehemiah 2-3) God had blessed and paved the way for success, but not everyone was happy with Nehemiah's plans.

Often God calls Believers to act, and all the plans fall into place. The journey is exciting ... then opposition strikes. Opposition may take many forms: criticism (from within and without the church), insufficient funds, less than understanding family members and friends, illness, fatigue. Doubts plague our thoughts: Did I misunderstand God's call or His answer to my prayers? Am I capable?

The Scriptures report opposition for those whom we know were following God's direction: Noah, Elijah, Daniel, David, Paul, Jesus. Prayer and Persistence were their responses.

Nehemiah 4:1-3. God's work will ignite ridicule and opposition. Opposition plagued Nehemiah and the Jews. Sanballat accused Nehemiah rebellion, furiously mocked the Jews and the wall, and made irrational charges. (Nehemiah 2:19-20; 4:1-3).

People often fear what threatens their comfort zone. Often that fear is

born of change: music styles, Bible translations, dress codes, vernacular changes, etc. The first time my teenagers requested to wear tennis shoes to church, my comfort zone went into overload! Now, I wear tennis shoes to church. The fear of loss of power and influence often breeds opposition. More than likely, that was Sanballat's problem.

Nehemiah 4:6-9. In spite of opposition, pray, fully do what God has led you to do. Nehemiah began by confronting Sanballat's charges with truth; he knew that Sanballat's

charges were irrational. Nehemiah declares that God will grant success; and that Sanballat has no authority or "claim in Jerusalem."

Nehemiah 2:20 (NLT) When Sanballat's charges become more serious, Nehemiah lays the situation before God and asks Him to avenge His followers. All the while, the people continue working.

The wall is "half its height...for the people had worked with enthusiasm." (vs. 6) The opposition is "furious" (vs. 7); they plan to "fight against Jerusalem." (vs. 8, NLT) Nehemiah and all

of the leaders act: "...we prayed to our God and guarded the city day and night to protect ourselves." (vs. 9 - NLT)

Whether our frustration or concern is physical, spiritual, mental, emotional, financial, or relational, our power to persist will only be found in prayer.

Nehemiah 4:14-18. Do your work with vigilance in the face of opposition. In verse 10-13, the Jews complain and grow discouraged. Their enemies have intensified their bullying. What do we do when we've prayed and the opposition intensifies? Nehe-

miah called the people together (a reminder to stay unified); he reminded them not to be afraid. Paul wrote that "God has not

given us a spirit of fear, but of power, love, and self-discipline." 2 Timothy 1:7 (NLT)

Nehemiah admonished, "Remember the Lord, Who is great and glorious, and fight for...your homes!" vs 14 (NLT). As Believers who are facing opposition, remembering past victories inspires us to persevere. Remember WHAT God has done for us, and WHY we persevere.

The enemies' plan was to frustrate and discourage the Jews; thereby, preventing the task that God had charged them to complete. Half of the men "worked while the other half stood guard...The leaders stationed themselves behind...The laborers carried on their work with one hand supporting their load and one hand holding a weapon..." vs 16-17. Strengthened in their hearts and prepared to fight for the cause that God had given them, the Jews persevered.

In 2 Corinthians 10, Paul's authority and motives are being challenged. He reminds us that "We use God's mighty weapons, not worldly weapons, to knock down the strongholds of human reasoning and to destroy false arguments." vs. 4 (NLT) Concerning persecution (2 Corinthians 6), Paul refers to our weapons as the "weapons of righteousness." vs 7. Ephesians 6:10-18 lists Believers' weapons: truth, righteousness, the Good News, faith, salvation, and the Word of God.

Jesus warned that opposition and persecution would be part of our lives. When faced with battles, we do not run; we do not quit; we do not wallow in discouragement. We PRAY and REMEMBER! Pray for boldness and perseverance. Remember WHAT He has done and WHY we fight!

Bannister is a member of Woodville Church, Woodville.

Bible Studies for Life

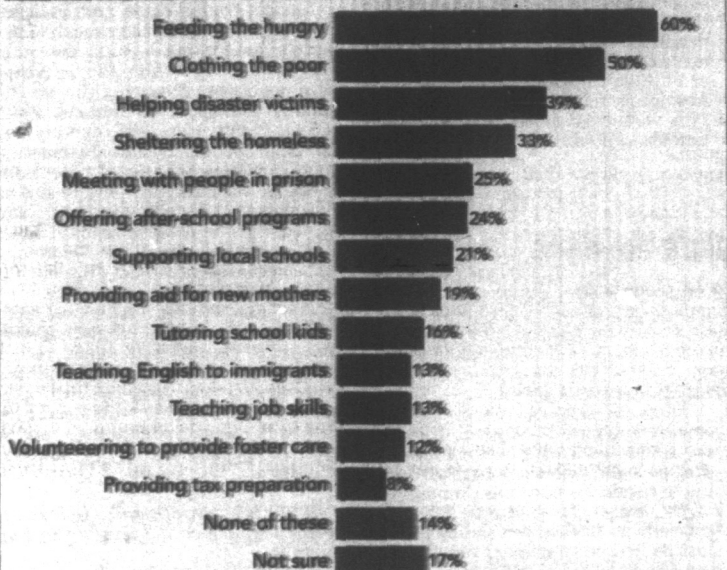
with Lisa Bannister



LifeWay Research: Ministries often go unnoticed

Among Americans:

Which, if any, of the following areas of service have you heard local Christian churches or their members doing in the last 6 months?



Note: Respondents could select all that applied.

NASHVILLE (BP) — The stark truth is that many Americans are unaware of various efforts by local Christians or churches to serve their neighbors, according to a new study from Nashville-based LifeWay Research, an arm of LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention that specializes in surveys about faith in culture and in matters that affect churches.

In a survey of 1,000 Americans, LifeWay Research looked at 13 service programs conducted by churches from tutoring kids to teaching job skills. Americans were asked if they'd heard of churches or church members being involved in those activities in the past six months.

Six in 10 say they know churches feed the hungry. Half say they know churches give clothing to the poor. Beyond that, acts of service by churches often appear to go unnoticed, said Scott McConnell, executive director of LifeWay Research.

"Unless you've received help from a church — or been involved in serving others — these kinds of programs may fly under the radar," McConnell said.

Few Americans were aware that churches help people prepare their taxes (eight percent), provide foster care (12%), teach English to immigrants (13%) or teach job skills (13%).

A few more know churches tutor kids (16%), provide aid to new moms (19%), support local schools (21%), offer after-school programs (24%) or visit people in prison (25%).

About a third of Americans know churches shelter the homeless (33 percent) and provide disaster relief assistance (39 percent).

Fourteen percent of Americans haven't heard of any of these services by churches. Seventeen percent were not sure.

Not surprisingly, Americans who attend religious services at least once a month are more likely to have heard about good works done by congregations:

■ 30% say they've heard of churches tutoring school kids. Only eight percent of those who attend less than once a month have heard of church tutoring programs.

■ 48% have heard of church members meeting with those in prison. Forty-five percent have heard of churches sheltering the homeless. Infrequent attenders are less likely to have heard of churches visiting prisoners (12%) or sheltering the homeless (27%).

■ 58% are aware of churches providing disaster relief compared to 29% of those who attend less often.

■ 72% are aware of churches giving clothing to the poor, while only 39% of those who attend church less than once a month have heard of such ministry.

■ 79% of those who attend services at least once a month have heard of churches feeding the hungry. About half (49%) of those who attend less often have heard of this.

Churches and church members often serve anyone from their community whether they attend services or not, said McConnell, but outsiders may not get the message, which he said is a problem: If people don't know about a church's efforts to serve others, they won't turn to a church when they need help.

With better awareness, those who don't go to church might show up to help their neighbors. A previous LifeWay Research study found that half of unchurched Americans — those who haven't attended services in the past six months — say they would be willing to help a church with a community service project.

LifeWay Research uncovers reasons for switching churches

NASHVILLE (BP) — Most churchgoers will put up with a change in music style or a different preacher, according to a LifeWay Research study — but don't mess with a church's beliefs or there may be an exodus.

The study of Protestant churchgoers found most are committed to staying at their church over the long haul, but more than half say they would strongly consider leaving if the church's beliefs changed.

Pastors often worry about changing church music and setting off a "worship war," said Scott McConnell, executive director of LifeWay Research, but few say they would leave over music.

Churchgoers are much more concerned about their church's beliefs. "Mess with the music and people may grumble," he said. "Mess with theology and they're out the door."

Thirty-five percent have been at their church between 10 and 24 years. Twenty-seven percent have been there for 25 years or more. Twenty-one percent have been there less than five years, while 17% have been at the same church for between five and nine years.

Lutherans (52%), Methodists (40%) and Baptists (31%) are most likely to have been at their church for 25 years or more. Fewer nondenominational (11%) or Assemblies of God/Pentecostal churchgoers (13%) have such long tenure.

"Most church members have been at their church longer than their pastor," McConnell said.

More than half of churchgoers say they are completely committed to continuing to attend their current church. About a quarter

are "very much" committed, while 11% are moderately committed. Two percent are slightly committed, while one percent are not committed at all.

The more people go to church, the more committed they are to attending their same church in the future. Those who attend at least once a week are twice as likely to be completely committed to attending their church (62%) than people who go once or twice a month (31%).

Those who attend once or twice a month are more likely to be moderately committed (36%) than those who go at least once a week (seven percent).

Churchgoers with evangelical beliefs are more likely to be completely committed (67%) than those who don't have evangelical beliefs (45%). Baptists (60%) are more likely to be completely committed than Lutherans (47%).

About two-thirds of churchgoers who are age 65 or older are completely committed to attending their same church in the future. That drops to 50% for those younger than 35.

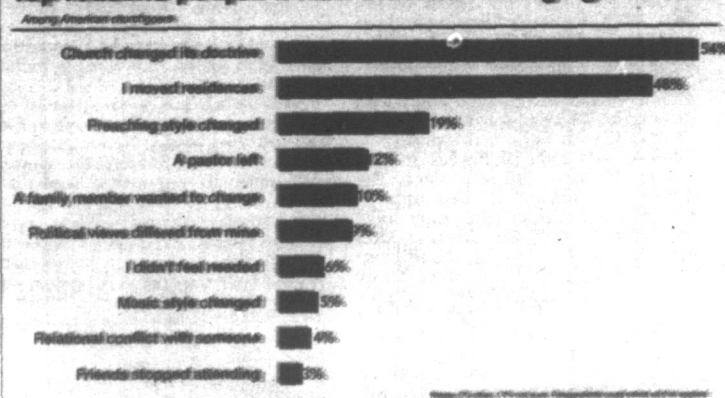
Older churchgoers are also least likely to want to leave their church. When asked if they've thought about going to another church in their area, 92% of those 65 or older say no.

Overall, 15% of churchgoers say they have thought about going to another church in the past six months. Eighty-five percent say they have not.

Of those thinking about going to another church, about half (54%) have already visited another church. Forty-six percent have not.

"If people are thinking about leaving

Top reasons people would consider changing churches



Note: If you select "I moved/residence," respondents would select all that applied.

your church, chances are they've already started looking," McConnell said, "so they're probably halfway out the door."

For the most part, churchgoers say they agree with their church's teaching. About half say their beliefs are completely aligned with those of the church. Forty-two percent say their beliefs are mostly aligned. Fewer than three percent say their beliefs are slightly aligned, not aligned or they don't know their church's beliefs.

Education plays some role in how churchgoers view their church's theology.

Churchgoers who have graduate degrees are less likely to accept all their church's teachings. Only a third say their beliefs are completely aligned with those of the church. Sixty percent say their beliefs are mostly aligned.

Two-thirds of churchgoers who have evangelical beliefs say they are completely aligned with their church's theology, while a third are mostly aligned. By contrast, 39% of churchgoers who don't have evangelical beliefs say they are completely aligned, and about half are mostly aligned.